

## **MY CONCEPTS - FEELINGS & ACTIONS**

**Feelings occur to remind me of the need to take action.**

**How I feel and how I act are two independent processes. The relationship between them is one that I have created.**

**“My feelings are like the paint of an artist, they colour my existence and fill me with awareness, creating a sense of purpose and endless potential, in the same manner that my actions are like the brush strokes of the artist, repeatedly dipping in the paint and painting the picture on the canvas of my life”.**

**- Toye Oyelese**

My intent here is to explain how I view the relationship that I have formed between my feelings and my actions and how this relationship can be modified and changed. Once the relationship is understood you will be able to successfully apply the “Best friend tactic”.

I am always motivated to survive and then thrive so because of this my primary task is to determine very quickly what might threaten or enhance my survival. When my survival is threatened I want to be able to recognize what the immediate danger is and take immediate action to avoid it. The action I take is defensive in nature and geared towards neutralizing a result that I don't want.

In order to act quickly in future I pair the feeling that I have just experienced with the action that I had taken, the purpose being offensive action to neutralize the threat more quickly and put me at an advantage. My motivation is strong but my objective is survival and my action is always designed to manage a threat.

When something enhances my survival I am getting the results that I want and I want to be able to recognize the opportunity if it occurs again. In order to obtain results that I want I need to determine how to repeat this when I need to. In order to act quickly

in future I pair the feeling that I have just experienced with the action that I had taken. My motivation is dependent on the intensity of the experience but my objective is to thrive.

A feeling is something that I experience consciously and I am aware of as emotions. These emotions create changes in my mental state and body physiology that makes them recognizable to me if I have experienced them before. The first time I experienced these feelings I gave meaning to them even when I did not have a name for them. The more intense the experience the more likely I am to remember the feelings I had and the actions that I have associated with them.

In psychology feelings refer to the conscious subjective experience of emotions. Emotions are subjective conscious experiences characterized by psycho-physiological expressions, biological reactions and mental states.

The feelings I experience are relative to my personal perspective and so how I interpret them is relative to how I see or perceive things. How I recognize what I am feeling is related to past interpretation or cataloging and when I experience something for the first time I can classify it as something I desire or not.

The relationship between my feelings and my actions is one that I have created and not a cause and effect as most people imagine. It is quite possible to feel strongly about something and yet act differently from how I feel. An example is a tired parent who feels angry because of the incessant all night crying of the little baby but yet is still able to take appropriate action (cuddle the baby) rather than inappropriate action (smother or shake the baby).

Often times people do not allow themselves to feel because of a conscious or unconscious fear of the actions that these feelings may produce and so they simply suppress these feelings while they choose what they consider to be an appropriate action. The problem with this approach (denial) is that these feelings are never truly processed and it becomes harder and harder for them to know who they are and how they really feel.

Processing my feelings involves allowing myself to become fully aware of them and embrace them even as I make a choice to act in accordance with or separate from what I am feeling. The goal is to allow myself to feel completely (and not make an attempt to pretend as though I did not feel that way) and then to choose an action that is in keeping with “being my best friend”. Note that I did not say act but deliberately used the term choose an action.

When people feel and act they will often act in a manner that is consistent with previous conditioning and this may not always be the best or most appropriate action. On the other hand when they choose an action they are allowing themselves to be consciously aware of their choice.

The tactic of “being my own best friend” allows me the option of unlimited feelings and this singular action. In other words it is okay to feel sad, angry, disillusioned, ashamed or any “positive” or “negative” feelings but the only action available is that of being my own best friend.

Being my own best friend is a process of self-acceptance without judgment, understanding my assets and liabilities, taking responsibility for my actions and shortcomings but never throwing myself under the bus. Anything I would do for my best friend I should do for myself first, before taking any action I always ask the question “am I being my own best friend by this action”.

**It is simply impossible to truly give to others what I don't have or will not give to myself.** If I don't love myself I cannot truly love anyone else, if I don't respect myself I cannot truly respect anyone else, I would simply be pretending or trying to make it up. Getting in touch with and being intimate with myself allows me to get in touch and be more intimate with those around me.

In any good relationship effective communication will lead to trust and trust will lead to intimacy. These principles also apply to the relationship that I have with myself.

I know that I am programmed to be validated it is the way I attach value to my existence. These doses of validation give me a feeling of wellbeing and sense of usefulness. External validation is what is provided by the things external to me and internal validation arises from the conversations I have within myself.

A person that validates themselves will very often do well even in the absence of adequate external validation but however a person who is very dependent on external validation and has poor internal validation would often self destruct as external validation is not within their control. I cover this topic in more detail in the section on “validation”.

How we feel about ourselves is integral to our “self identity”. I cannot control how people feel about or think of me and although this is relevant, what is more important is how I feel about or think of myself. That is what impacts my “self identity” the most. It is okay to feel ashamed but it is not okay to be ashamed.

Feeling ashamed of myself is okay but being ashamed of myself is not. It sounds like I am saying the same thing but there is a profound difference. Feeling ashamed is intangible but gives me a sense of awareness of my state of affairs and the consequence of this feeling relates to the action I take.

Being ashamed however is a tangible action that will result in me becoming ashamed of myself. My feelings are like the paint of an artist, they colour my existence and fill me with awareness creating a sense of purpose and endless potential. My actions are like the brush strokes of the artist repeatedly dipping in the paint and painting the picture on the canvas of my life ultimately determining what things look like.

The only relationship between feelings and action is that which I create. People suppress feelings because they are worried they would choose an inappropriate action and this suppression of feelings creates a dishonest communication within the person. Feelings are the very essence of being alive and so we should allow

ourselves to feel and then choose appropriate action.

The beauty of our existence is free will and choice and even not choosing is a form of choice in the same manner that non-believing is a form of believing therefore we are always engaged and involved and we sometimes choose our direction by not choosing our direction. The key is to be comfortable with the realization that we have all control and we have no control at all at the same time.

**Points to remember:**

Feelings occur to remind us of the need to take action.

How we feel and how we act are two independent processes. The relationship between them is one that we have created.

No matter how we feel about ourselves we should always take an action that is in keeping with being our best friend.